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**REMARKS**

Claims 28-29 stand rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. Claims 28 and 29 have been amended to recite "the article."

Claims 22-54 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Foster (U.S. Patent No. 5,879,532). Foster does not disclose an article having a nickel layer, a strike layer consisting essentially of zirconium, titanium, or zirconium-titanium alloy that directly contacts the nickel layer, and an uncoated outer layer consisting essentially of zirconium compound, titanium compound, and zirconium-titanium alloy compound that direct contacts the strike layer. Foster discloses an article including a layer of refractory metal or refractory metal alloy 22 applied on an electroplated layer of nickel, copper or chrome, a sandwich layer 26 including alternating layers of refractory metal compound or refractory metal alloy compound 28 and refractory metal or refractory metal alloy 30 applied on the layer 22, a layer of refractory metal compound or refractory metal alloy compound 32 applied on the sandwich layer 26, and a layer of the reaction products of refractory metal or refractory metal alloy with oxygen and nitrogen 34 (Figures 4 and 6) applied on the layer 32. In another embodiment, the article includes a layer of refractory metal or refractory metal alloy 22 applied on an electroplated layer of nickel, copper or chrome, and a layer of refractory metal compound or refractory metal alloy compound 32 applied on the layer 22, and a layer of refractory metal oxide or refractory metal alloy oxide 36 applied on the layer 32 (Figure 5). The Examiner contends that the claimed invention is anticipated by Foster. Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Foster does not disclose an article having a nickel layer, a strike layer consisting essentially of zirconium, titanium, or zirconium-titanium alloy that directly contacts the nickel layer, and an uncoated outer layer consisting essentially of zirconium compound, titanium compound, and zirconium-titanium alloy compound that direct contacts the strike layer. In the embodiment of Figures 4 and 6, the layer of refractory metal or refractory metal alloy 22 directly contacts the electroplated layer, and the layer of refractory metal compound or refractory metal alloy compound 28 of the sandwich layer 26 directly contacts the layer 22. However, the layer of refractory metal compound or refractory metal alloy compound 28 is not uncoated as claimed. At least one layer of refractory metal or refractory metal alloy 30 of the sandwich layer 26 is applied

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on the layer 28, in addition to the layer of refractory metal compound or refractory metal alloy compound 32 and the layer of the reaction products of refractory metal or refractory metal alloy with oxygen and nitrogen 34. Therefore, the layer of refractory metal compound or refractory metal alloy compound 28 is not uncoated as claimed.

Additionally, the claimed invention is not anticipated by the embodiment of Figure 5. In Figure 5, the layer of refractory metal or refractory metal alloy 22 directly contacts the electroplated layer, and the layer of refractory metal compound or refractory metal alloy compound 32 directly contacts the layer 22. However, the layer 32 is coated by the layer of refractory metal oxide or refractory metal alloy oxide 36. Therefore, the layer 32 is not uncoated as claimed by Applicant. The claimed invention is not anticipated, and Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 39 and 43 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being obvious over Foster in view of Fink (U.S. Patent No. 5,759,677). The Examiner states it would be obvious to employ the coating of Foster in a doorknob because of Fink. Claims 39 and 43 depend on patentable independent claims 22 and 32, respectively, and are allowable for the reasons set forth above. Adding Fink to Foster still does not render Applicant's claims obvious because neither reference teaches an uncoated outer layer consisting essentially of zirconium compound, titanium compound, and zirconium-titanium alloy compound that directly contacts a strike layer consisting essentially of zirconium, titanium, or zirconium-titanium alloy that directly contacts a nickel layer as claimed. Therefore, the combination of these references does not teach, suggest or disclose the claimed invention. The claimed invention is not obvious, and Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection be withdrawn.

Thus, claims 22-53 are in condition for allowance. No additional fees are seen to be required. If any additional fees are due, however, the Commissioner is authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 50-1482, in the name of Carlson, Gaskey & Olds, P.C., for any additional fees or credit the account for any overpayment. Therefore, favorable reconsideration and allowance of this application is respectfully requested.

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Respectfully Submitted,

**CARLSON, GASKEY & OLDS, P.C.**

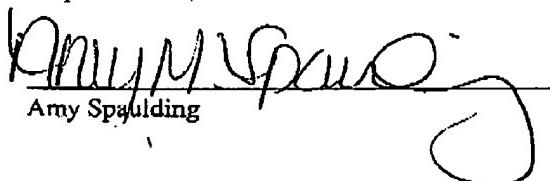


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**CERTIFICATE OF FACSIMILE**

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being facsimile transmitted to the United States Patent and Trademark Office, (703) 872-9306 on September 17, 2004.



Amy Spaulding